

## Message Text

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PAGE 01     PRETOR 05875 251109Z  
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W  
-----251111Z 122142 /13  
O 251017Z DEC 76  
FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6505

C O N F I D E N T I A L PRETORIA 5875

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PFOR RH  
SUBJ: RHODESIA: TEA PLANTATION MASSACRE

REF: PRETORIA 5873 AND 5874

1. DURING COURSE OF CONVERSATION WITH HAROLD HAWKINS ON DECEMBER 24, HE BROUGHT UP ISSUE OF INTERNATIONAL INVESTIGATION OF TEA PLANTATION MASSACRE. HE REFERRED TO STATEMENTS ATTRIBUTED TO JOSHUA NKOMO TO THE EFFECT THAT MERCENARIES MIGHT HAVE PERPETRATED THE CRIME AND THAT THERE SHOULD BE AN INTERNATIONAL INVESTIGATION. HAWKINS SAID HIS GOVERNMENT DOES NOT HIRE MERCENARIES AND ALL THE EVIDENCE POINTS TO TERRORISTS FROM MOZAMBIQUE. HIS GOVERNMENT WOULD WELCOME AN INTERNATIONAL INVESTIGATION AND HAD INSTRUCTED HIM TO CONVEY THIS MESSAGE TO HMG AND USG. HE SAID HE HAD ALREADY DONE THIS BY LETTER TO SIR DAVID SCOTT, WHEREUPON HE PRODUCED AN IDENTICAL INFORMAL LETTER ADDRESSED TO ME THE TEXT OF WHICH IS AS FOLLOWS:

DEAR BILL:

MR. JOSHUA NKOMO MADE A STATEMENT YESTERDAY IN WHICH HE SAID "MERCENARIES" MIGHT HAVE BEEN RESPONSIBLE FOR THE MASSACRE OF THE TWENTY-SEVEN TEA PLANTATION WORKERS AT ABERFOYLE IN THE EASTERN DISTRICTS OF RHODESIA. APPARENTLY HE WENT ON TO SAY THAT THERE SHOULD BE AN INTERNATIONAL INVESTIGATION INTO THE

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INCIDENT.

THE RHODESIAN GOVERNMENT MADE A STATEMENT REFERRING TO THIS YESTERDAY AFTERNOON WHICH SAID THERE WAS OVERWHELMING EVIDENCE THAT THE ATROCITY HAD BEEN CARRIED OUT BY RHODESIAN TERRORISTS OPERATING FROM MOZAMBIQUE. THE GOVERNMENT SAID

IT WAS SATISFIED THAT THEY BELONGED TO THE GROUP WHICH MR. MUGABE AND MR. NKOMO CLAIMED TO REPRESENT AT GENEVA. THE OBJECT OF THE MASSACRE WAS TO DETER BLACKS FROM WORKING ON THE TEA ESTATE AND WAS TYPICAL OF THE TACTICS OF FEAR USED BY THE TERRORISTS AGAINST THEIR OWN PEOPLE. THE GOVERNMENT DENIED THAT RHODESIA EMPLOYED MERCENARIES.

RESPONDING TO MR. NKOMO'S SUGGESTION ABOUT AN INVESTIGATION, THE GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN SAID THAT WE WOULD WELCOME THE AMERICAN OR BRITISH GOVERNMENTS INVESTIGATING THE MASSACRE. I AM ASKED WHETHER YOUR GOVERNMENT WOULD INDICATE IF IT IS PREPARED TO DO THIS.  
YOURS SINCERELY,

HAROLD

2. HAWKINS EXPLAINED THAT THE IDEA OF A LETTER WAS HIS, NOT HIS GOVERNMENTS. I NOTED THAT THE LETTER ENDED WITH A REQUEST TO KNOW WHETHER THE USG WOULD BE PREPARED TO MAKE AN INVESTIGATION OF THE MASSACRE. HE SAID THAT WAS ALSO HIS INITIATIVE SINCE HIS INSTRUCTIONS CALLED ONLY RPT ONLY FOR LETTING THE BRITISH AND AMERICAN GOVERNMENTS KNOW THAT RHODESIA WOULD WELCOME AN INTERNATIONAL INVESTIGATION. OBVIOUSLY, CONTINUED HAWKINS, HIS GOVERNMENT DOES NOT WANT A BIASED INVESTIGATIVE BODY, BUT IF THE BRITISH OR AMERICANS WOULD CONDUCT THE INQUIRY, THEN THEY COULD BE SURE THAT IT WOULD BE OBJECTIVE.

3. SIR DAVID SCOTT TELLS ME THAT HAWKINS DID NOT MAKE TO HIM THE ORAL CLARIFICATION MENTIONED IN THE PRECEDING PARAGRAPH. SCOTT SENT THE LETTER TO LONDON SAYING THAT THERE MIGHT BE SOME MERIT TO MAKING THE INQUIRY IN ORDER TO SEE WHAT IS GOING ON IN  
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THE OPERATIONAL AREAS BUT IF UNDERTAKEN IT SHOULD BE DONE JOINTLY WITH USG. IF USG IS NOT INCLINED TO PARTICIPATE, HMG SHOULD NOT DO IT ALONE. IN RESPONSE TO HIS REQUEST FOR MY VIEWS, I TOLD HIM I DID NOT BELIEVE THAT WE WOULD WANT TO ASSUME SUCH A RESPONSIBILITY. IT WOULD PUT US RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE BETWEEN WHITE RHODESIANS AND BLACK NATIONALISTS WHERE WE COULD NOT HOPE TO WIN ANY ADVANTAGE.

4. SIR DAVID HAS JUST INFORMED ME THAT LONDON, BASED ON THE EARLIER PRESS REPORTS FROM SALISBURY, HAS PUBLICLY STATED IT IS NOT PREPARED TO MAKE THE INQUIRY. HE HAS ALSO RECEIVED A MESSAGE FROM FCO EXPLAINING WHY HMG DOES NOT WANT TO BECOME INVOLVED AND ASKING HIM TO CONVEY THE NEGATIVE RESPONSE TO HAWKINS.

5. ACTION REQUESTED: THAT I BE AUTHORIZED TO TELL HAWKINS INFORMALLY THAT USG HAS TAKEN NOTE OF RHODESIA'S INTEREST IN AN OUTSIDE INQUIRY OF THE INCIDENT BUT IS NOT IN A POSITION TO UNDERTAKE SUCH A TASK.

BOWDLER

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NNN

## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** Z  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** TEXT, DIPLOMATIC COMMUNICATIONS, INVESTIGATIONS, MASSACRES, AGRICULTURAL WORKERS, TEA, MERCENARIES  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 25 DEC 1976  
**Decaption Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Decaption Note:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** saccheem  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1976PRETOR05875  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
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**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** D760472-0504  
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